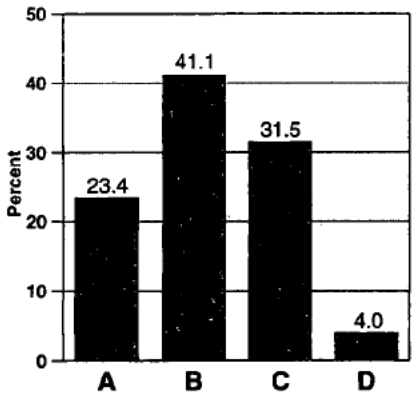
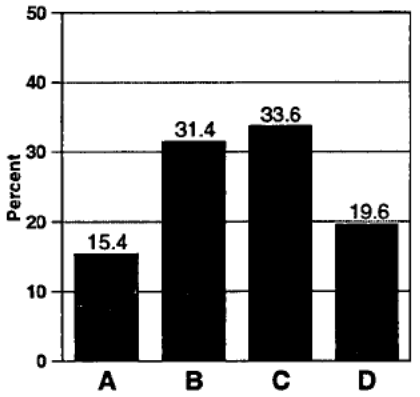
Social Studies 30

Diploma Examination Results
Examiners' Report for June 1997

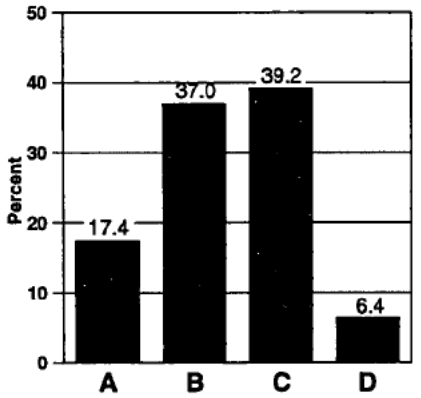
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the June 1997 administration of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been provided to schools and school jurisdiction offices. A provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, April, June, and August results is made available annually.

Description of the Examination

The Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a multiple-choice section worth 70% and a written-response section worth 30% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 10 508 students who wrote the June 1997 examination.

- 93.6% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 17.4% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Overall, student achievement in Social Studies 30 was satisfactory. Students demonstrated a good understanding of Social Studies knowledge. In composing their essays, many students showed a clear understanding of the issue under discussion, as well as competent skill in developing and organizing an argumentative paper. The addition of a discretionary half-hour of writing time allowed students to focus more on planning, editing, and proofreading their written work.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 69.1%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 63.1%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 66.4%.

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Student Evaluation

[redacted]

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Part A: Multiple Choice

Examination Blueprint

Part A: Multiple Choice has a value of 70 marks, one mark for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: by the curricular content area (topic) being tested and by the knowledge and skill objectives required to answer the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1997 according to these classifications.

All questions on the diploma examination require students to demonstrate knowledge of social studies content and to apply social studies skills to that knowledge base. The reporting categories below define the general types of questions that appear on the examination and the categories for which information is reported.

Question Classification by Knowledge and Skill Objectives		Question Classification by Topic		Total Questions
		Topic A: Political and Economic Systems	**Topic B: Global Interaction in the 20th Century**	
		Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the world's political and economic systems as outlined in the *Program of Studies.*	Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the interaction of nations since 1918 as outlined in the *Program of Studies.*	
	Comprehension of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of generalizations, key concepts, and facts related to social studies content.	1, 2, 3, 5, 15, 16, 21, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31	36, 37, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 57, 63, 68, 69, 70	24
	Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge of social studies content by interpreting and analyzing information and ideas.	4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 22, 26, 32, 33	38, 44, 51, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 64, 66	23
	Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of social studies content by synthesizing information and ideas, and evaluating their accuracy and worth.	8, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 23, 27, 29, 34, 35	39, 40, 41, 46, 49, 50, 52, 53, 61, 62, 65, 67	23
	Total Questions	**35**	**35**	**70**

*Subtest Results**

Results are reported in average raw scores.

Total Part A: 45.7 out of 70

by Topic

- Political and Economic Systems: 22.7 out of 35
- Global Interaction in the 20th Century: 23.0 out of 35

by Knowledge and Skill Objectives

- Comprehension of Information and Ideas: 15.4 out of 24
- Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas: 15.1 out or 23
- Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas: 15.2 out of 23

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school results.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	B	70.7
2	C	66.8
3	A	63.5
4	B	42.4
5	C	53.6
6	C	81.1
7	A	67.1
8	C	86.4
9	C	67.8
10	B	62.3
11	C	77.7
12	D	53.8
13	D	53.9
14	B	70.8
15	B	77.2
16	A	50.7
17	D	42.7
18	B	67.9
19	D	54.4
20	C	56.7
21	B	63.5
22	C	74.9
23	D	73.5
24	B	67.7
25	C	64.0
26	C	79.3
27	B	60.9
28	A	64.6
29	D	59.6
30	A	58.3
31	C	54.0
32	D	74.0
33	B	78.5
34	A	49.7
35	D	79.6
36	A	68.0
37	D	64.1
38	C	53.5
39	B	58.6
40	C	74.3
41	D	76.7
42	A	70.0
43	B	60.3
44	B	78.2
45	D	76.6
46	B	71.8
47	A	68.2
48	D	60.5
49	C	79.7
50	B	73.7
51	C	60.5
52	A	74.5
53	D	74.2
54	D	87.2
55	C	77.4
56	D	72.1
57	B	70.1
58	D	37.4
59	A	43.8
60	A	62.9
61	D	68.5
62	A	44.6
63	C	53.3
64	B	65.8
65	A	50.6
66	D	71.5
67	B	64.1
68	C	63.4
69	C	82.9
70	A	45.0

*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results with the provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examiners' Comments

The multiple-choice section of the examination requires students to go beyond simply recalling information and to apply their knowledge and thinking skills. Students must demonstrate that they understand social studies concepts; that they comprehend historical, political, and economic relationships; and that they can interpret and evaluate social studies information and ideas.

During the marking session, markers were asked whether the standards embedded in the multiple-choice questions were appropriate and fair. These teachers generally concurred that this section of the examination set an appropriately demanding standard of achievement for graduating Social Studies 30 students. They found the data sources relevant and engaging and the questions challenging but fair.

The following table gives results for five questions selected from the examination. The table shows the percentage of students, in three groups, that answered each question correctly. The comments on pages 4 and 5 address some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

	Question Number					
Student Group	**4**	**9**	**10**	**16**	**36**	**58**
All students	42.4	67.8	62.3	50.7	68.0	37.4
Students achieving the *standard of excellence* (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	64.4	94.2	86.6	81.2	89.5	67.9
Students achieving the *acceptable standard* who received marks between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	35.0	61.0	56.6	41.1	61.9	27.7

4. Historically, which action is **inconsistent** with the economic goal and ideology?

	Ideology	Economic Goal	Action Taken
A.	Socialism	Equality	Establishing income subsidies
* B.	Fascism	Economic growth	Nationalizing the means of production
C.	Communism	Rapid industrialization	Increasing capital goods production
D.	Capitalism	Individual prosperity	Encouraging entrepreneurial activities

Question 4 required students to demonstrate their knowledge and comprehension of a number of key historical terms and phrases by determining which action is inappropriately associated with a particular ideology and economic goal. This question is classified as an Interpretation/Analysis question on Topic A, Political and Economic Systems. Students found this question difficult, with only 42.4% of all students answering correctly. However, 64.4% of those students achieving the standard of excellence chose the correct response. That 37.3% of students who achieved between 50% and 64% concluded that increased capital goods production was inconsistent with the communist goal of rapid industrialization suggests some serious conceptual confusion.

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*How would Canadian citizens **who firmly believe in the principles of free enterprise** respond to the proposals stated in questions 9 and 10?*

A. They would be ideologically **neutral** to the proposal.

B. They would feel that the proposal is **consistent** with their beliefs.

C. They would feel that the proposal is **inappropriate** because of its "left wing" orientation.

D. They would feel that the proposal is **inappropriate** because of its extreme "right wing" orientation.

9. The federal government proposes to form a major Crown corporation in the petrochemical industry. **(Key C)**

10. The federal government proposes to end the universality of family allowance payments. **(Key B)**

Questions 9 and 10 required students to categorize two government proposals according to the ideological perspective of a supporter of the principles of free enterprise. Essentially, students had to recognize the relationship between an economic proposal and the reaction it would invite from a specific point of view. These questions are classified as Interpretation/Analysis questions on Topic A.

Neither question was overly difficult: 67.8% of all students and 94.2% of those who achieved the standard of excellence answered question 9 correctly, and 62.3% of all students and 86.6% of those achieving the standard of excellence answered question 10 correctly. The achievement results from these questions (and similar ones throughout the examination) are a credit to the critical thinking skills and grasp of knowledge demonstrated by many Grade 12 Alberta social studies students.

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16. According to the capitalist model, a government wishing to advance the collective good should

* **A.** abolish marketing boards
B. end free trade agreements
C. increase welfare services
D. subsidize health care

Question 16 placed an interesting demand upon students' ability to avoid stereotyping social studies terminology. The expression "collective good" is often and easily associated with liberal and left-wing perspectives but does have equal relevance for those on the right. Students had to recognize this fact by concluding that abolishing any form of market regulation would, to a capitalist, be to everyone's benefit. This question is classified as a Knowledge/Comprehension question on Topic A.

Students found this question somewhat difficult, with 50.7% of all students answering correctly. However, 81.2% of those achieving the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

36. President Wilson's goal of a lasting peace in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s was ultimately shattered by

* **A.** the rise of fascist dictatorships in Germany and Italy

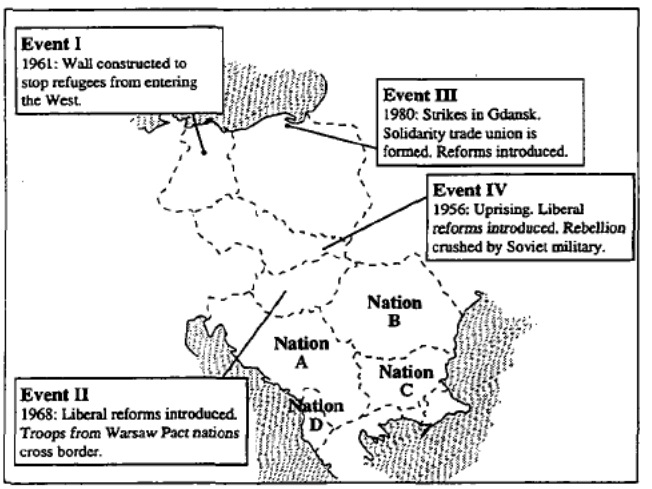
B. tension and conflict over the dispersal of former colonies

C. Germany's refusal to admit guilt in causing the First World War

D. conflicting economic goals between capitalist and socialist ideologies

Question 36 required students to recall which factor was most responsible for eroding stability and peace in Europe during the interwar years. This question is classified in the blueprint as a Knowledge/Comprehension question on Topic B. The question was not difficult: 68.0% of all students (89.5% of those students achieving the standard of excellence) chose the correct response. However, a closer statistical review of this question reveals that of the total number of females who answered question 36, only 61.0% answered correctly compared with 75.8% of males.

Use the following map to answer questions 58 to 60.



—adapted from *The Modern World Since 1917*

58. Which two Cold War events are **incorrectly** matched with their location on the map?

A. Events I and IV
B. Events I and II
C. Events II and III
* **D.** Events II and IV

Question 58 was the first question from a family of three questions based on a map of Eastern Europe that also included reference to certain key events of the Cold War period. As a first step to answering these questions correctly, students had to recognize which nations were represented by the boundaries indicated on the map and, secondly, they needed to confirm these locations with historical events. As selecting the correct responses required students to sift detail and information for recognition and accuracy, these questions are classified as Interpretation/Analysis questions on Topic B.

To answer question 58 correctly, students had to determine which two events were incorrectly assigned on the map. Students found this question to be difficult, with only 37.4% of all students answering correctly (67.9% of those achieving the standard of excellence). Many students appear to be having difficulty with the geographic arrangement of the nations of Eastern Europe. Given the emphasis placed on the Cold War in the curriculum, teachers may wish to take this result into consideration when planning instruction in this area.

Part B: Written Response

The results for the written-response section of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination are tabulated according to the percentage of students achieving at each level (1 to 5) in each of the scoring categories. Each scoring category assesses somewhat different skills; consequently, individual students' scores are likely to vary from one category to another. Those students who achieve at or above the standard of excellence (80%) on the written-response section tend to have scores of **4 Proficient** or **5 Excellent** for all scoring categories. Students meeting the acceptable standard (50%) on the written-response section tend to have scores of **3 Satisfactory** or greater for most scoring categories but may produce **2 Limited** work or less for one or two categories.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignment and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **3 Satisfactory** level. The scoring guides that describe proficiency levels are in the 1996–97 *Social Studies 30 Information Bulletin.*

The written-response section contributes 30% of the total examination mark. Students are required to write one complete and unified essay in which they discuss the importance and complexity of an issue and rationally defend their position by using supportive, relevant evidence. The organization of arguments should show evidence of logical thought that should persuade the reader. Students are expected to make use of their critical and creative thinking skills to demonstrate complex and independent thought.

Part B: Written Response has a total value of 30 marks: 10 marks each for *Defence of Position* and *Quality of Examples,* and five marks each for *Exploration of the Issue* and *Quality of Language and Expression.* The average raw score mean for Part B was 17.3 out of 30. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to the provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

It should be noted that beginning in January 1995, a two-marker system was adopted for marking Part B; this means that it is now possible for students to be awarded marks that are midway between scoring criteria. (See the following table.)

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
		Excellent		Proficient		Satisfactory		Limited		Poor	
		5	4.5	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1	Ins*
Exploration of the Issue	5	2.7	3.8	10.7	13.5	25.6	19.3	16.1	5.3	2.5	0.5
Defence of Position	10	2.1	3.5	10.5	13.7	24.6	21.0	16.5	5.3	2.5	0.5
Quality of Examples	10	2.2	3.2	8.1	11.1	20.8	19.8	19.7	8.5	6.2	0.5
Quality of Language and Expression	5	3.0	4.1	13.5	17.3	37.8	14.9	6.7	1.6	0.6	0.5

* **Ins** (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a **Satisfactory** standard of performance.

Topic A

Some people believe that democratic governments should allow the presence of extremist political movements or organizations within society. Others believe that democratic governments must protect society from the beliefs and programs of extremists by banning their activities.

To what extent should democratic governments restrict the activities of extremist political movements in their societies?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Topic B

During the twentieth century, many nations have surrendered aspects of their sovereignty to participate in supranational organizations. Other nations have been unwilling to relinquish aspects of their sovereignty to such organizations, preferring to retain full freedom of action.

To what extent should nations sacrifice their sovereignty in order to participate in supranational organizations?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Examiners' Comments

The results of the written component for the June 1997 examination showed a comparable and encouraging average score (17.3/30) consistent with those achieved provincially in January 1997 and through 1995–96. These are amongst the highest average scores achieved provincially since the inception of diploma examinations in 1984.

Students' writing continued to show growth and consistency in the presentation of well-argued and well-organized position papers. Many students, particularly those choosing Topic B, made effective use of ideas and information presented in the multiple-choice section of the examination. As well, many students had no difficulty understanding the assigned issues and, hence, demonstrated less uncertainty or confusion in approaching the topics under discussion. As one teacher-marker commented, "I believe that the topics provided accessibility for most students, who responded accordingly with a wide range of relevant examples and case studies, both historical and contemporary." As a result, few papers received a poor or insufficient grade. Often, students were quite thoughtful and creative in the development of their papers.

Many students extensively and appropriately drew examples from current events—examples that enhanced the quality and interest level of their presentation. For example, with Topic A, many students made reference to such extremist movements as the IRA, the PLO, and the KKK, or provided evidence from the Oklahoma City bombing and the rise of extremist militia movements. With Topic B, many students referred to the current significance of such organizations as the United Nations, the EU, and the World Trade Organization. Such essays demonstrated a continuing tendency to focus more on a survey-oriented approach, with numerous examples used to illustrate and support relevant arguments.

It was felt by many markers that those students dealing with Topic A often demonstrated a mature and sophisticated appreciation of the issue and that their exploration of the issue's importance and complexity was often the strongest component of their essay. For example, many students grasped the serious dilemma faced by democracies in dealing with extremist movements in relation to rights and freedoms. Many also recognized that extremist movements are not all by nature and motivation violent but may in their evolution and protest become an accepted part of the mainstream and ultimately be of benefit to society.

Some students, however, continued to view issues in overly simplistic, black-and-white terms, arguing, for example, that democracy can only be saved by restricting the freedom of expression of extremist, minority groups because such groups are criminally violent. Causes and actions for such students often became blurred.

In dealing with Topic B, many students generally understood that nations must sacrifice aspects of their sovereignty to join with, and participate in, supranational organizations. They were able to elaborate upon the implications and consequences of such sacrifices in terms of applaudable goals, both self-serving and global. Markers did comment, however, on the apparent conceptual confusion demonstrated in weaker papers regarding the meaning of, and relationship between, sovereignty and supranationalism. Such papers, for example, often equated the latter concept exclusively with the search for collective security. This would suggest that teachers may wish to focus instructionally upon a greater clarification of these terms.

Students achieving the acceptable standard were able to express an adequate understanding of the complexity and significance of an issue. These writers often recognized the principles underlying different viewpoints associated with an issue and generally established a historical or contemporary frame of reference for an issue's importance.

Students achieving the standard of excellence perceptively investigated the complexity and significance of the issue, often throughout the fabric of their response. Such students were comfortable revealing to the reader what they genuinely thought, rather than attempting to write what they felt the reader wanted to hear.

As in previous administrations, many students demonstrated an awareness that a stronger position paper is developed by establishing a basis for each argument or reason and then applying specific historical and contemporary examples as supportive evidence for each argument. Students achieving the acceptable standard supported their position with several adequate arguments. Although these arguments lacked in elaboration and depth of understanding, they were connected to the issue under discussion and to the position taken. Supportive evidence used by these writers to bolster an argument was generally relevant but not error-free, and more often general rather than specific in presentation. Such writers, despite making minor errors, demonstrated control of the conventions of language.

Students achieving below the acceptable standard did not link their examples in a meaningful way to their positions and often exhibited vagueness and confusion with key social studies concepts. They developed evidence primarily in descriptive terms, unloading as much data as they could recall and thus exhibiting little sense of its organization and applicability. Superficial descriptions of detail and the presentation of extraneous information resulted in lower scores. Students achieving below the satisfactory level demonstrated poor control of conventions.

Students achieving the standard of excellence composed powerful and forceful arguments that were firmly rooted in the application of germane, well-chosen evidence—evidence that in many instances supported a qualified position. Students at this level wrote carefully organized essays essentially free from errors in mechanics and grammar.

Generally, teachers were satisfied with the curricular fit of the two written questions. Based upon a review of the essays submitted at the June 1997 writing of the Social Studies 30 Examination, Alberta's students have learned a great deal.

Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B

	Part A	Part B
A	23.4%	11.7%
B	28.7%	18.6%
C	29.2%	41.1%
F	18.7%	28.6%

While it is not intended that parts A and B of the examination be considered as separate examinations or that each part necessarily tests the same curricular objectives, it is interesting to see the distribution of student results.

In June 1997, considerably more students were awarded scores in the "A" category on Part A of the examination than on Part B, and considerably more students were awarded scores in the "F" category on Part B of the examination than on Part A. These scores do not signal a new phenomenon, but are consistent with results of recent administrations.

Readers are reminded that a *Samples of Student Writing* document, based on essays written from the January 1995 administration, is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre, 12360 - 142 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 4X9, 403-427-5775 (Fax 422-9750). The order number is 308660-01 @ $4.40 per booklet.

For further information, contact Barry Jonas (bjonas@edc.gov.ab.ca) or Elana Scraba (escraba@edc.gov.ab.ca) at the Student Evaluation Branch at 427-0010. To call toll-free from outside of Edmonton, dial 310-0000.

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